



Dear Red Griffin Family and Friends,

A great deal has happened since our last newsletter! After leaving Hong Kong, the Red Griffins have faced a wide variety of challenging experiences, meeting every one with pride and professionalism. I want to take this opportunity to share with you the highlights of our transit to our current station in the Arabian/Persian Gulf.

As we approached Singapore, the Constellation Battle Group engaged in a two-day exercise with the Singapore Navy. The Griffins were in their element and led the way in a successful defense of the Battle Group. Upon completion of this evolution the USS Constellation pulled in for six days in Singapore. Here the Red Griffins were enjoyed all sorts of activities, from kayaking to golf. Additionally, many took advantage of unique experiences like the Night Zoo and a variety of attractions on Sentosa Island.

Following the port visit in Singapore, it was back to work. After leaving Singapore, the Constellation Battle Group made the transit across the expanse of the Indian Ocean. While conducting rigorous flight operations in preparation for future operations, the USS Constellation made a good clip through the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea to our intermediate stop, the Arabian/Persian Gulf.

Since arriving "On Station", every Red Griffin continues to make significant contributions in support of OPERATION SOUTHERN WATCH. While the days are often long, the positive and motivated morale of the Griffin team is nothing short of amazing. I could not be more proud of our truly amazing and inspiring group of professionals. Their

performance during the first few months of deployment has been the envy of the air wing. I must take this opportunity to thank you, for your support, without which this would not be possible.

Christmas time was upon us shortly after arriving in the gulf. Being away from loved ones during the holidays is perhaps one of the most difficult of aspects of Navy life. While the USS Constellation served up an outstanding holiday feast, it was closely rivaled by the spread that was laid out in the ready room, the result of Griffins sharing the many gifts they had received from home, complete with a gingerbread aircraft carrier! The Griffin family knows no bounds and in spite of the difficulty of separation during the holidays, we were all inspired by the love of our families and friends. Thank you all.

With about a month in the gulf completed, it was time for a well deserved break. On the tenth of January the Constellation dropped anchor in Bahrain for four days. This proved to be a great opportunity for your Griffins to rest up and recharge their batteries for the demanding schedule that lies ahead, in addition to enjoying the exceptional shopping and sightseeing available there.

Finally, I must bid fair winds and following seas and offer sincere thanks for his inspirational leadership to our former skipper, CDR Hart. He headed home after the change of command on January sixteenth, full of anticipation of the coming reunion with his family but also with sadness of leaving the Griffin team. We wish Billy, Maureen and family the best of luck for all that the future holds.

Remember to contact Mrs. Michele Klees, the Command Ombudsman, if there are any problems that you or your family needs help while we are deployed. Michele has been doing an outstanding job assisting our sailors' families throughout this past year. She can be reached at: Mama_griffin@yahoo.com or by calling (619) 429-8854.

What your Red Griffins do for our country is truly vital. Without the support and love from those at home it just wouldn't happen. The job that is being done out here by each and every individual is a huge source of both inspiration and pride for me. I

consider it an honor to be their Commanding Officer.

Sincerely,

S. M. Kelly
Commanding Officer

CMC's CORNER

Greetings from the Fighting Red Griffins CMC. It is amazing how quickly time flies without realizing it. The halfway mark of our historical deployment has arrived! The Sailors of VS-38 have performed magnificently and accomplished milestone achievements. As the Commanding Officer remarked to a group of Red Griffins the other day, "He has never had the honor or privilege to serve with a finer group of maintenance professionals in his career."

The hallmark of the Red Griffins' achievements is Sailors constantly striving to make a difference. Each year two of them are selected from the ranks as VS-38's Senior and Junior Sailors of the Year. I am proud to announce the Sailors of the Year for 2002: **AE1(AW) James Bosworth**, Senior Sailor, and **AD3(AW) Jay Anthony Ferrer**, Junior Sailor. Congratulations!!!

Additional recognition goes out to our new Sailors of the Month for January 2003. They are **AO1(AW) Robert Sepulveda**, Senior Sailor; **AM3 Antonio Gaag**, Junior Sailor; and **AN Sean Newman**, Plane Captain.

Of course the Red Griffin performance is not only marked by the efforts of a few, it is the collective efforts of a great team. A great team succeeds because the people genuinely believe in the team's pursuits, feel empowered to do their best, and rely on a great support network. When people like what they are doing, they keep doing it. In the month of January six (6) Red Griffin Sailors decided to continue their pursuit of serving on the finest team in the world, the U.S. Navy. Special recognition goes out to **YNC(AW/SW) Michael Stacey** and his wife Mary, **AEC(AW) Dave Derby** and his wife Antoinette, **AM2 Gerry Legg** and his wife Julene, **AE2(AW) Jason Mitchell** and his wife Mary Elizabeth, **AE3 Larry McDaniel**, and **AE3(AW) Jesus Mendoza** on their

decision to continue on the Navy team!!!

The start of 2003 rang in on a somber note in the history of the squadron. As part of the Navy's S-3B SUNDOWN Plan, VS-38 received notification of its disestablishment date of April 2004. What does this mean to you and your Sailors? Ultimately, when the hangar doors shut in April 2004, every Sailor will transfer to another duty station. Many will remain in San Diego, others will transfer to bases on the west coast, while others may go to the east coast or overseas. The choices abound. In an effort to ease the transition process, Sea Control Wing Pacific at NAS North Island is offering to host a Disestablishment Meeting for all the Red Griffin spouses near the end of February. We want you to be well informed to what's around the corner, and we know you are an important part of this process. All interested should contact the command ombudsman, Michele Klees.

CMDCM(SW) Chris Thompson

